

MINUTES

**McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission
Community Development Conference Rooms
1st Floor, One Civic Center, 7447 E. Indian School Road
November 6, 2003
5:00 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Art DeCabooter
Christine Kovach
Dennis Carr
Les Conklin
Virginia Korte
Howard Myers
Arnold Roy
Solange Whitehead
Erik Filsinger (5:30)

Absent: Laura Fisher
Don Ruff

Staff: Bob Cafarella
Claire Miller
Don Meserve

Visitors: Carla, Rebecca Allen, and Mike Levy

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION WAS MADE BY Commissioner Carr TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 2, 2003 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Commissioner Conklin, WHICH CARRIED unanimously 8 TO 0.

MOTION WAS MADE BY Commissioner Conklin TO APPROVE THE OCTOBER 20, 2003 MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Commissioner Whitehead, WHICH CARRIED unanimously 8 TO 0.

SOLFEST STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Cafarella reported SolFest is an event celebrating the environment taking place on April 16, 17, and 18, 2004 at Westworld and that the City of Scottsdale is sponsoring activities for

elementary school kids on Friday April 16, 2004. The intent is that this would become an annual event. He further reported the Environmental Quality Advisory Board (EQAB) has asked if someone from the Commission would like to serve on the Steering Committee. Commissioner Whitehead volunteered to serve on the Steering Committee.

AMENDMENTS TO CONCEPTUAL TRAILS PLAN

Ms. Miller passed out a copy of the revised Conceptual Preserve Trail System for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Carla, Chair of the Planning Committee, reported that after all of the months spent working on updating the plan there were very few changes to recommend. This shows they don't propose changing things lightly. She provided a brief review of the changes.

Ms. Miller updated the Commission on the joint meeting with the Fountain Hills group on trail links, noting that it turned out it was a moot issue because they were able to locate the trailhead within their own community and are planning a loop trail entirely in Fountain Hills. Their earlier trail plan had a trail dead-ending at the boundary of the Preserve in steep terrain where there was no connecting trail planned in the Preserve in Scottsdale. She also reported that there is not any opportunity for access in the Dixie Mine area right now.

Carla stated that the AZ Game and Fish Department was always a part of the Planning Committee and provided input on the impacts of proposed trails on wildlife.

Ms. Miller reviewed where the connections are identified into the County park and the Tonto National Forest. Carla discussed the problems associated with putting connections too close to each other.

Commissioner Myers inquired if there was the possibility of connecting with the Sunrise Trail from Fountain Hills trails. Ms. Miller replied that she did not see any logical connections.

Commissioner Kovach inquired if there was a reason to approach Fountain Hills. Carla reported that Fountain Hills talked to their Commission and staff several times and they made it very clear that they agreed with MCO and did not see an option.

Commissioner Kovach stated on the Lost Dog Wash trail on the Ringtail area, the trails map shows it going immediately left instead of right. She further stated Chet Andrews advised her that the right side of the Ringtail Loop trail is not the best for horses. Commissioner Kovach inquired if at some point they would put categories on trails eliminating dogs or restricting users.

Ms. Miller stated they have always maintained that all trails would be multi-use. Mr. Cafarella stated once the trail is built and they determine it is unsuitable for certain users they would make that clarification. He further stated the Commission has a policy regarding dogs that they must be on a leash and they must be picked up after. The Commission has maintained the flexibility that, if there is a problem area, they can recommend and post that trail as no dogs allowed.

Commissioner Carr stated he was not familiar with the terrain south of Bell Pass. He inquired if there was a possibility of making a trail connection from Taliesin Wash over the mountains to the County park. Ms. Miller replied that would be very rugged terrain for building and sustaining a trail. Carla noted that this area, of State Trust land currently, is one of the uninterrupted and undisturbed wildlife areas within the Preserve that is recommended as an animal sanctuary.

Carla stated the Planning Committee is requesting a motion from the Commission to accept the changes to the Conceptual Preserve Trail System Map, and send a strong recommendation to Council for staff to work to get the jeep trail to Thompson Peak from the east side open.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Commissioner Korte to approve the changes made to the Conceptual Preserve Trail System Map as presented by staff and recommended by the Planning Committee. And recommend Council to work with staff to get the trail to Thompson Peak open. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Commissioner Carr, WHICH CARRIED unanimously 8 to 0.

STATUS OF FUNDING RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Cafarella reported the Commission's funding recommendation will go before the Mayor and City Council this coming Monday, November 10th at their work study session. He further reported Council would receive a presentation on the public opinion survey that was conducted by the Trust for Public Land. He noted he would be formally presenting to Council the approved recommendation from the Commission relative to calling a May election on Preserve funding. He further noted the hope is that Council would provide clear direction to staff on the next move.

REVIEW OF MCDOWELL SONORAN MONTH

Ms. Miller reported that overall everything went well during McDowell Sonoran Month, October 2003. She provided an update on the equestrian trail ride and the privately sponsored bike ride. She further reported that they would be graduating the sixth Preserve steward class noting there would be 19 graduates. Ms. Miller reported the Saturday cleanup project went well.

Chair DeCabooter inquired when the next Preserve steward class would be held. Carla replied in Fall 2004.

STATE TRUST LANDS WORKING GROUP

Carla provided a brief update on the State Lands Working Group. She stated they have been discussing the API urban but there is the feeling they might want to include some rural changes. The group must decide what they want on the ballot soon to stay on schedule for an election.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Cafarella stated he had already covered everything.

PRESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Miller stated they are looking at planting more native trees at Brown's Ranch in the Preserve to continue the re-vegetation project but they are having a difficult time keeping the cows out.

FUTURE EXECUTIVE SESSION

Future Executive Session for McDowell Sonoran Preservation Commission:

MOTION WAS MADE by Commissioner Carr TO HOLD EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR DECEMBER 4, 2003 FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC BODY AND CONSULTATION WITH CITY ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE TO CONSIDER ITS POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE. ARS 38-431.03 (A) (3) and (A) (7). MOTION WAS SECONDED BY Commissioner Myers, which carried unanimously 8-0.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Cafarella stated at the next meeting the Commission would review the Capital Improvement Program. The Commission would be presented with the plans for the trailhead sites at Hidden Hills. He further stated there might be a request for the Commission to take public testimony on the funding for the Preserve.

Commissioner Myers stated he would like to have a discussion on the scenic corridors at a future meeting.

Commissioner Kovach stated she thought it would be helpful for the Commission to be provided with the history, background, and the role of the Preserve Stewards.

Commissioner Korte stated she felt they should continue to have status reports on the funding recommendations.

Commissioner Carr suggested having a joint meeting with the Phoenix Commission.

Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

For the Record Court Reporters

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